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ANNUAL REPORT.



IT is pleasant to be able to note that the past year has been an unusually prosperous one for the Society. There has been a substantial addition to the membership, as is shown by the large increase of income from assessments shown by the Treasurer's Report. It is encouraging, furthermore, that the new members are not confined to the immediate vicinity of Cambridge, but are widely scattered over the country. The Society has always regarded itself not as local, but as national, or indeed more than national in its character. We would say, in the words of our poet himself, *Nos autem cui mundus est patria, velut piscibus aequor*. It is, accordingly, a cause for genuine satisfaction to find that many persons too remote from Cambridge to hope ever to participate directly in the activities of the Society are glad to associate themselves with its efforts to extend the study of the works of Dante. Only a genuine interest of the highest kind leads such persons to become members. The Society exists with the distinct understanding that members

must not expect a direct and material return from their contributions. No one can say that he has got his money's worth, in the ordinary sense of the phrase, from his membership. That this is so is illustrated by the fact that the Society's Annual Report, which is the only visible return most members have from their annual assessment, may be bought by any one for one-fifth the amount of the assessment. The only motive, then, upon which the Society can rely for the extension of its activities is the desire of generous minds to further the cause of what is best in literature and in life. Those who feel that it is highly important that Dante should be more than a mere name to the present, and that the serious study of him makes for the perfecting of our generation, and of future generations, may well think that it is profitable to contribute to the maintenance of a Society whose one and only aim is to hold up a standard of sound scholarship in Dante studies, and to aid those who would attain it.

As is generally known to the members of the Society, the money obtained by assessments is used mainly in three ways: (1) for the publication of the Annual Reports, and of such other contributions to the study of Dante as the funds may from time to time make it possible to print; (2) for the increase of the collection of Dante books in the Harvard University Library; (3) for the maintenance of a Dante Prize, to be awarded to the best essay handed in each year by a student in

some American college. In the last matter, the Society has been greatly assisted by the generosity of one of its members, and of the mother of Mr. C. S. Latham, who won the prize for 1889-90. In the first particular, still another member has rendered very important aid. The Dante Collection, too, has been greatly augmented by gifts, so that the expenditures of the Society may be said to have brought a return of several fold. This appears from the following table, due to the kindness of Mr. Frank Carney, of the Harvard University Library, showing the number of volumes in the Collection, in each year from 1885, when it was arranged as it now is, down to the present year, 1897:

1885 (Feb. 4) . . .	654 vols.	1891	1314 vols.
1885 (Oct. 1) . . .	818 "	1892	1400 "
1886	944 "	1893	1460 "
1887	1010 "	1894	1532 "
1888	1094 "	1895	1636 "
1889	1164 "	1896	1707 "
1890	1241 "	1897	2064 "

This considerable collection of books about Dante is available for all members of the Society, wherever they may be, upon application made through the Secretary. The bibliographies appended to the Annual Reports afford an easy means of ascertaining what additions are made to the Collection from year to year.

The contributions printed in the Report this year are: (1) a collation by Mr. Paget Toynbee of the

text of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, as established and published for the Italian Società Dantesca by Professor Pio Rajna, with the Oxford text of Dr. Edward Moore; (2) a bibliography of the additions to the Dante Collection in the Harvard University Library for the two years 1895-1897, prepared by Mr. Theodore W. Koch. As was explained in the Report for 1896, the bibliography for 1895-96 was crowded out of that Report by the extent of Mr. Koch's paper on Dante in America. It is hoped that it may not prove less useful when combined with the bibliography for 1896-97. Mr. Toynbee's careful collation of the two best texts of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* will certainly prove very valuable to members of the Society and to all serious students of Dante.

The Society has to express once more its gratitude to authors and other well-wishers who are constantly helping its work by contributing books and articles to the Dante Collection.

ARTHUR RICHMOND MARSH, *Secretary*.

For the Council of the Dante Society.